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WORKING LANDSCAPES WORKGROUP ACTION PLAN

Goal I: Support locally based collaborative initiatives. Support locally based programs and projects that integrate habitat restoration, flood control, agricultural land preservation and other CALFED goals and objectives, and that address other concerns of local communities. These may include the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum (SRCAF), the Delta Protection Commission and other programs in the Delta, San Joaquin River, and Sacramento River watersheds.

A. Identify and select local projects that achieve CALFED goals and objectives. Identify local projects with ongoing or proposed collaborative initiatives that can help meet one or more CALFED goals and objectives.

1. *Define selection criteria.* Define criteria for the selection of local projects to receive assistance through the Working Landscapes Workgroup.

Lead: CDFA
Schedule: Complete by next Workgroup meeting (June/July 2002)
Budget: n/a

2. *Select local projects.* Based on the selection criteria defined as described above, and a yet to be determined process, identify appropriate local projects for the support in I(B), below, and describe (i) the project, (ii) the CALFED goal(s) or objective(s) the project will help to meet, (iii) the assistance needed, and (iv) the desired outcome from providing such assistance.

Lead: CDFA
Schedule: Complete by August 30, 2002
Budget: n/a

B. Support identified local projects. Depending on its goals and the assistance needed, support the local project in one or more of the following ways.

1. *Provide funding for projects identified in I(A), above.* Possible sources of funding include existing funding administered by CALFED agencies and additional funding provided by Prop 40. Funding may be used to support direct assistance from NGOs, such as Sustainable Conservation or the American Farmland Trust, and quasi-public entities such as RCDs and Resource Conservation and Development councils.

Lead: DOC
Schedule: TBD based on specific local project
Budget: \$1m/yr., depending on project selection and needs

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2. *Provide funding for technical assistance to support development and implementation of projects identified in I(A), above.* Direct technical and other assistance would be provided by appropriate CALFED agencies, such as DOC, CDFA, NRCS, DFG, USFWS and NMFS. Technical assistance would be provided as needed on a project by project basis. In one case, the expertise needed may be engineering while in another it may be equipment operation, grant writing or permit assistance.

Lead: NRCS
Schedule: TBD based on specific local project
Budget: \$750k/yr., depending on project selection and needs (estimate based on 1.0 FTE and expenses for each of 10 projects, half in support of item I(B)(3), below)

3. *Provide Permit Assistance to Projects that Promote the Working Landscape Approach to CALFED Implementation.* Possible means of providing permit assistance are (i) through a grant to an NGO or work similar to that proposed to the Work Group in April 2002 by Sustainable Conservation. This grant would support training in permit streamlining and assistance to establish a local, coordinated permitting program (one-stop shopping). Staff support at the watershed level to receive training and implement permit assistance would be necessary for some projects and could be provided via item I(B)(2), above. Alternately, direct permit assistance could be provided by one or more CALFED agencies.

Lead: DOC/CA Assoc. of RCDs
Schedule: TBD based on specific local program
Budget: \$250k

4. *Support SB 231 Voluntary Local Programs.* A voluntary local project developed pursuant to SB 231 could streamline permitting for locally based programs and provide significant benefits to wildlife. Funding or other appropriate assistance will be provided to locally based programs, if any, that propose to develop a SB 231 voluntary local program. Funding would also be made available for outreach to landowners and watershed groups about the provisions of SB 231 (see items III(C) and (B), below). Support could be for separate projects as those to be identified in item I(a)(2), above, or a component of one of those projects. If the latter, costs would be less.

Lead: DF&G/CDFA
Schedule: TBD based on specific local program
Budget: \$250k (based on support for five demonstration projects with a part-time staff assigned to each, plus outreach costs)

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C. Support the development of agriculture protection and enhancement plans/plan elements and programs. To help inform locally based agriculture preservation programs and wildlife conservation programs, as well as actions by CALFED agencies, funding or other appropriate assistance will be provided for mapping criteria for the evaluation of the status of agricultural resources in the Delta and Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys, and for the development of priorities for collaborative and strategic local and regional agriculture protection plans and CALFED regional implementation plan agricultural elements.

1. *Support farmland mapping and assessment.* Map and evaluate the status of agricultural resources in the Delta and Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys. Maps would be interpretive tools based on existing information, such as the DOC Important Farmland Map series. Maps would provide specific information on agricultural land conversion status and be used to target agricultural land protection and enhancement (see item I(C)(2), below).

Lead: DOC (or DPC for Delta mapping/evaluation)
Schedule: DPC contract with DOC to conduct mapping signed by 10/02; map legends and parameters defined by 1/03
Budget: \$150k for DPC map; similar costs for other regions

2. *Agriculture protection programs.* Refine American Farmland Trust's development of an agricultural and ecological resources protection plan in the Delta to include stakeholder and scientific input. Seek financial support for the development and implementation of the plan. Agriculture protection programs in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys will follow in subsequent years. These plans would be developed to serve as a land protection action component of the agricultural elements of CALFED regional implementation plans (see item I(C)(3), below). These plans will also serve as models to catalyze other local efforts at agricultural land protection.

Lead: DOC/DPC
Schedule: Refine AFT program proposal by 9/02; agreements in place to begin work on the plan by 3/03; complete element by 3/04
Budget: \$300k

3. *Include agricultural element in regional implementation plans.* In each of the CALFED Program's regional implementation plans, include an agricultural element that sets forth objectives and actions for enhancing agriculture as a viable component of the working landscape, and describes how the CALFED ROD commitments will be implemented, including the reduction and mitigation of impacts to agricultural lands. The first agricultural element will be developed for the Delta Regional Implementation Plan. It is expected that item I(C)(2) will be one component of the element.

Lead: CDFA
Schedule: Contract in place by 3/03; Complete Delta element 3/04
Budget: \$500k maximum estimate for Delta agricultural element

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D. Support development of conservation incentives. Support and promote programs, policies and legislation that create incentives for wildlife conservation on agricultural lands.

1. *Provide supplemental or matching funds for AWIP.* Identify or create a state funding source to supplement or match annual funding for the USFWS' Agricultural Waterfowl Incentives Program.

Lead: DF&G
Schedule: Complete by 10/02
Budget: \$1 to 2m for match in 2003

2. *Call for Legislation to Reauthorize AWIP.* CALFED, Resources Agency and CDFA officials will communicate to Congressional representatives and the Bush Administration their desire to renew authorization for the AWIP.

Lead: CDFA
Schedule: Letter and briefing submitted by 7/02
Budget: n/a

3. *Assess need for new legislation.* Meet with public agencies and stakeholders to assess the need for new legislation similar to AB 1398 to create incentives for conservation on agricultural land and provide state match for Farm Bill programs. Prepare recommendation to CALFED management committee.

Lead: DF&G/CDFA
Schedule: Complete by 9/02
Budget: n/a

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Goal II: Minimize/Mitigate Adverse CALFED Impacts on Agricultural Resources.

A. Develop strategies to implement CALFED ROD commitments.

Develop strategies and mechanisms at the program-level that can be used to mitigate project-specific impacts to agricultural resources and to advance agricultural preservation generally.

1. *Develop CALFED agricultural resources impact mitigation protocol.* Develop a policy document that describes and explains specific mitigation measures that will be used to minimize and mitigate impacts to agricultural lands, including adjacent agricultural lands, in accordance with the CALFED ROD. The policy will set forth specific strategies to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts to agricultural resources that will normally be used for specific actions. Existing examples of the application of mitigation measures will be referenced or linked to the extent they are available.

Lead: DOC
Schedule: Complete by 12/02
Budget: \$100k

2. *Establish agricultural conservation bank and mitigation fund.* Create an agriculture conservation bank in the Delta, and create a mitigation fund within the California Farmland Conservancy Program Act Fund. Impacts by CALFED actions on agricultural land could be mitigated using either the bank or the fund. However, use of either must be directly linked to a particular impact, with the bank more appropriate for the mitigation of program level impacts and the fund for project level impacts. Impacts on agricultural resources could be mitigated by CALFED agencies, as well as other public and private entities, by either purchasing credits at the bank (for impacts to agricultural resources in the Delta) or contributing the mitigation fund. The mitigation of third party or adjacent lands impacts via on-the-ground measures could also be mitigated with the deposit of a mitigation fee to the fund. While the early work will focus on the Delta, the ultimate goal is to develop at least a mitigation fund for use throughout the CALFED solution area.

Lead: DPC for conservation bank/DOC for mitigation fund.
Schedule: Develop conservation bank proposal and establish mitigation fund by 9/02
Budget: \$500k/\$500k (initial fund and bank deposits)

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B. Resolve disincentives for conservation in rural communities. Support and promote programs, policies and legislation that remove disincentives for conservation in rural communities.

1. *Minimize agriculture-wildlife habitat land use conflicts.*

a. Support Development of Good Neighbor Policies. Support local development of policies that minimize conflicts between agricultural land uses and wildlife habitat in the Delta and the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys. Support may include, where appropriate, regulatory assistance, such as assistance in the development of Safe Harbor Agreements, SB 231 Voluntary Local Programs or similar regulatory mechanisms. The first good neighbor policy supported will be the policy proposed for the SRCAF.

Lead: DF&G/USFWS/NMFS

Schedule: TBD by SRCAF

Budget: n/a

b. Provide funding for conflict reduction measures. Include funding for measures to reduce conflicts with agricultural land uses in ERP habitat restoration and enhancement actions. Such measures may include management of groundwater seepage, fencing, vegetative buffers, acquiring easements on buffer areas, and planting crops on restored habitat land to draw wildlife away from private agricultural land. Because of prior work that has been conducted, focus on the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum for initial support for conflict resolution.

Lead: CALFED Program

Schedule: ongoing

Budget: TBD based on specific ERP action

2. *Analyze economic impacts within rural communities.* To inform CALFED agencies and others about the impact of habitat restoration actions in rural communities, funding will be provided for socio-economic studies.

a. Complete Stanislaus County Study. Provide funding necessary to complete the Stanislaus County study. (Placeholder)

Lead:

Schedule: Complete by 10/02

Budget: \$100k

b. Provide funding for CSU-Hayward study of the barriers to and opportunities for the implementation of working landscapes practices on agricultural land in the Delta.

Lead: CDFA

Schedule: Complete contract for study by 12/02

Budget: \$200k

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3. *Support PILT payments.* Analyze existing laws, regulations and policies concerning PILT payments and support and promote policies or legislation that lead to increased PILT payments.

Lead: DF&G/USFWS/DOC
Schedule: Analysis and proposal complete by 12/02
Budget: \$100k

C. Evaluate the ecologic and economic costs and benefits of farming and restoration practices that promote the creation of Working Landscapes.

Support research and monitoring of the ecological benefits of agriculture-friendly wildlife habitat restoration and wildlife friendly farming practices to determine whether ERP goals and objectives can be achieved with greater emphasis on the use of such practices, and less emphasis on public acquisition of private agricultural lands.

1. *Initiate CALFED Science Program monitoring and evaluation.* Through the CALFED Science Program, monitor and evaluate the habitat benefits of wildlife-friendly farming/farming-friendly habitat restoration on selected projects identified in Goal I. Prepare report explaining the results of monitoring and evaluation.

Lead: CALFED Program
Schedule: Complete proposal for directed action by 11/02
Budget: \$250k

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Goal III: Coordinate Funding and Outreach to Rural Communities.

A. Develop web-based conservation toolbox. Develop an area within CDFA's website that provides a one-stop source of information on the various financial incentives and sources of technical assistance available to agricultural landowners. The website would contain a comprehensive list of links to websites that provide specific information about relevant programs and would provide notices of workshops, meetings and conferences for landowners interested in wildlife conservation on agricultural land, as well as other land stewardship issues.

Lead: CDFA/NRCS
Schedule: Complete by 12/02
Budget: \$100k one-time and \$30k annually

B. Coordinate funding. Establish process to better coordinate CALFED ERP funding and funding *priorities* with state and federal programs, including Farm Bill programs.

Lead: CALFED Program
Schedule: Prepare recommendation for coordination between CALFED and NRCS by 10/02
Budget: n/a

C. Conduct landowner workshops. Work with the Comprehensive Study team and farm groups, including AFT, to schedule local workshops to offer information to landowners about various topics, such as improving agricultural operations, estate taxes, environmental regulation, and wildlife conservation. One of the major goals of the workshops will be to explain incentives for wildlife conservation on agricultural lands and how they can improve or complement ongoing agricultural operations. The workshops can show landowners how to profit from agriculture and meet regulatory requirements using various incentives.

Lead: AFT/Comprehensive Study/CDFA
Schedule: Conduct first workshop by 7/02
Budget: \$150k (for planning match for all workshops and conducting first three years of workshops)

D. Prepare publications supporting wildlife friendly farming. Prepare publications and articles for landowners to increase their awareness of available programs and practices that enhance habitat values on commercial agricultural operations. Publications would include "how-to" booklets, brochures, press releases and premiums. An initial publication will be an informative premium, a calendar.

1. Farming for Wildlife Calendar. Resume production of the Farming for Wildlife calendar published by the Central Valley Habitat Joint Venture and DFG in the late 1990s. The calendars would feature photos of successful projects and growers; stories of growers' successes in their own words, and a summary of tools or incentives used to make the

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projects successful. In addition, each calendar would include a listing of relevant workshops, classes and other events planned for that year. The calendar would also include contact information for public agencies and private entities involved with agriculture and wildlife conservation. Calendar items would be posted and updated on the conservation tools website (see item III(A), above) where calendar owners could check for new items with which to update their calendars.

<u>Lead:</u>	CDFA
<u>Schedule:</u>	Prepare calendar for 2003
<u>Budget:</u>	\$50k